

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **PASTOR CONVICTED OF AGGRAVATED CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

**PHOENIX, ARIZONA** -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on April 10, 2003, Henry Saunders, former pastor at the Sweetwater Church of God, DOB12/22/43, of Sweetwater, Arizona, was found guilty of three counts of Aggravated Sexual Abuse of a Child, by a federal jury at Prescott, Arizona.

The evidence at the 8-day trial showed that on multiple occasions in 1993, the defendant sexually abused his niece, then 11 years of age, by forcing her to engage in sexual intercourse in his house, in his trailer, and in a truck on the side of the road. At the time of the abuse, the defendant was serving as pastor at the Sweetwater Church of God, Sweetwater, Arizona. During the trial, the defendant testified on his own behalf, alleging that the criminal investigator in the case fabricated a written statement containing a partial confession to the crimes.

The defendant was remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshals after trial.

(MORE)

Henry Saunders, had been charged with violating Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 2241(c). The case was tried before United States District Court Judge James A. Teilborg, from April 1-11, 2003, in the federal courthouse in Prescott, Arizona

A conviction for Aggravated Child Sexual Abuse carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$250,000.00 fine or both.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was supervised by Criminal Investigator Jefferson Joe of the Navajo Nation Criminal Investigation Service, Shiprock, New Mexico, and assisted by Special Agent Douglas Lintner of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Gallup, New Mexico.

Sentencing is set before Judge James A. Teilborg on June 25, 2003.

The prosecution is being handled by Soo C. Song, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-02-321-PCT-JAT  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2003-057

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